

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

The attached drawing sheets include includes changes to Figs. 1, 2A and 7A. Also attached are sheets marked up to show the changes.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets, Annotated mark-up sheets

REMARKS

The applicants note with appreciation the acknowledgement of the claim for priority under section 119 and the notice that all of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

The applicants acknowledge and appreciate receiving an initialed copy of the form PTO-1449 that was filed on March 2, 2004.

The drawings and the specification are objected to for the reasons stated in the office action. Reference character 11b, which does not appear in the description, has been deleted from Figs. 2A and 7A. Reference characters 1a and 1b, appearing in Fig. 1, have been changed to 101a and 101b, respectively. The specification has been amended to conform to the amended drawings. In view of the amendments to the drawings and specification, the examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the objection.

Claims 1 – 2 and 4 are pending. Claims 3 and 5 have been canceled without prejudice. The applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of this application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

On page 7 of the office action, dependent claims 3 and 5 were objected to, but indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claims 3 and 5 have been incorporated into independent claim 1 and 4, respectively, and it is respectfully submitted that claims 1 and 4 as amended are allowable. Claims 3 and 5 were canceled. In view of the above, the applicant submits that the claims are patentable.

The applicants have rewritten the claims in independent form since the office action indicated that claims 3 and 5 would be allowable if so re-written. However, the applicants do not concede that other features in the claims are found in the prior art.

The applicants wish to clarify for the record, if necessary, that the claims have been amended to expedite prosecution. Moreover, the applicants reserve the right to pursue the original subject matter in a continuation application.

Any narrowing amendment to the claims in the present Amendment is not to be construed as a surrender of any subject matter between the original claims and the present claims; rather this is merely an attempt at providing one or more definitions of what the applicants believe to be suitable patent protection. In addition, the present claims provide the intended scope of protection that the applicants are seeking for this application. Therefore, no estoppel should be presumed, and the applicants' claims are intended to include a scope of protection under the Doctrine of Equivalents.

For all the reasons advanced above, the applicants respectfully submit that the claims as amended are allowable.

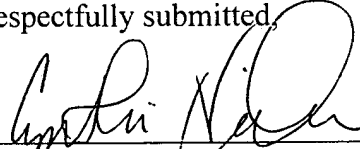
Claims 1, 2 and 4 were rejected under 35 USC 102(a) as being anticipated by various references. In view of the above amendments and comments, it is respectfully submitted that the rejections are moot.

In view of the foregoing, the applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance. A timely notice to that effect is respectfully requested. If questions relating to patentability remain, the examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone.

Serial No. 10/790,029

Please charge any unforeseen fees that may be due to Deposit Account No. 50-1147.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cynthia K. Nicholson', written over a horizontal line.

Cynthia K. Nicholson

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Fig. 1

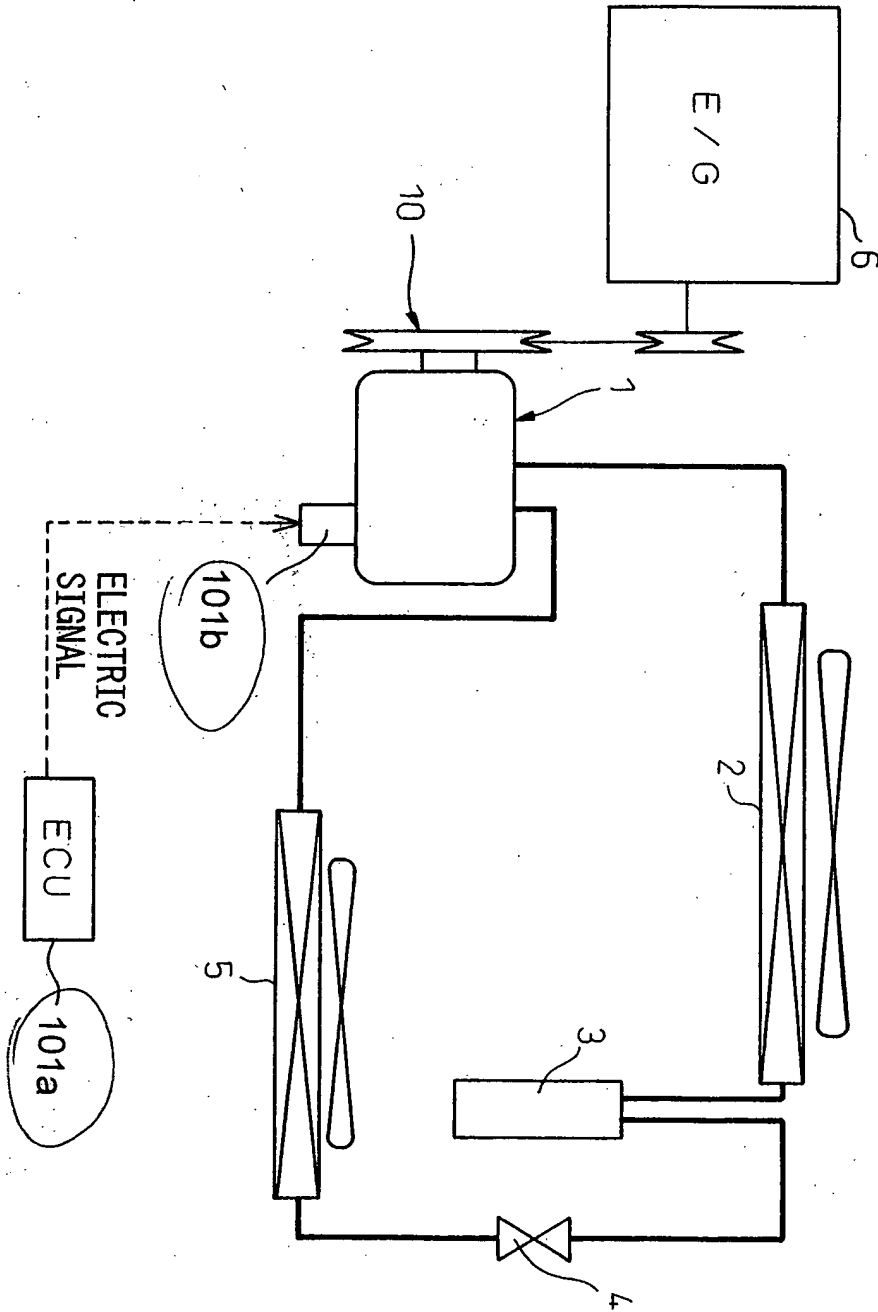


Fig.2A

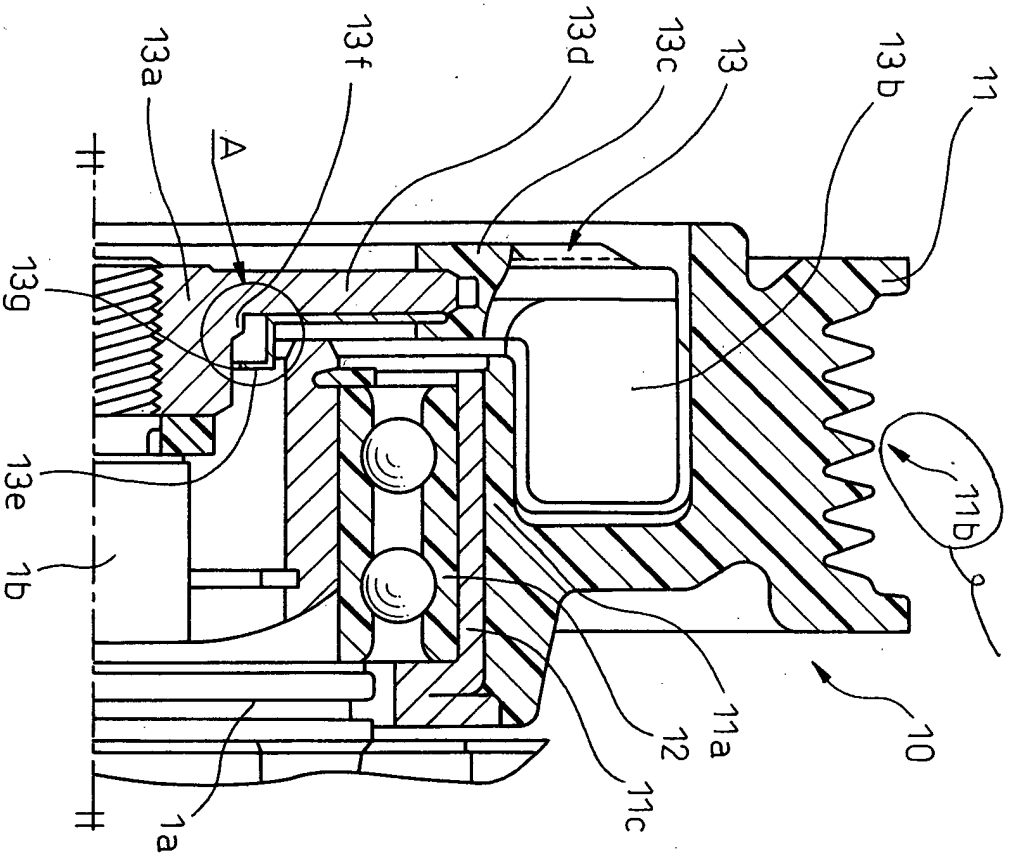
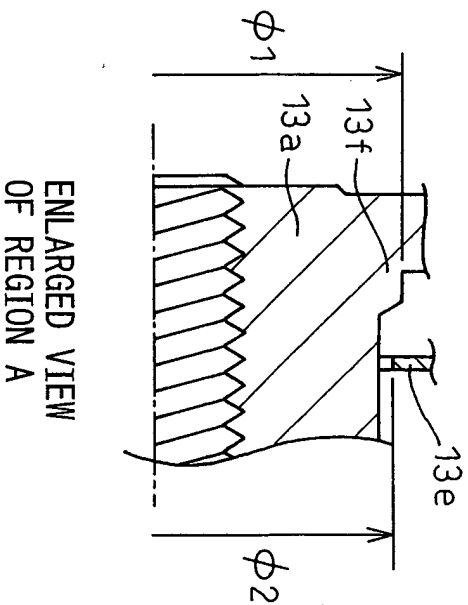


Fig.2B



ENLARGED VIEW
OF REGION A

Fig. 7A

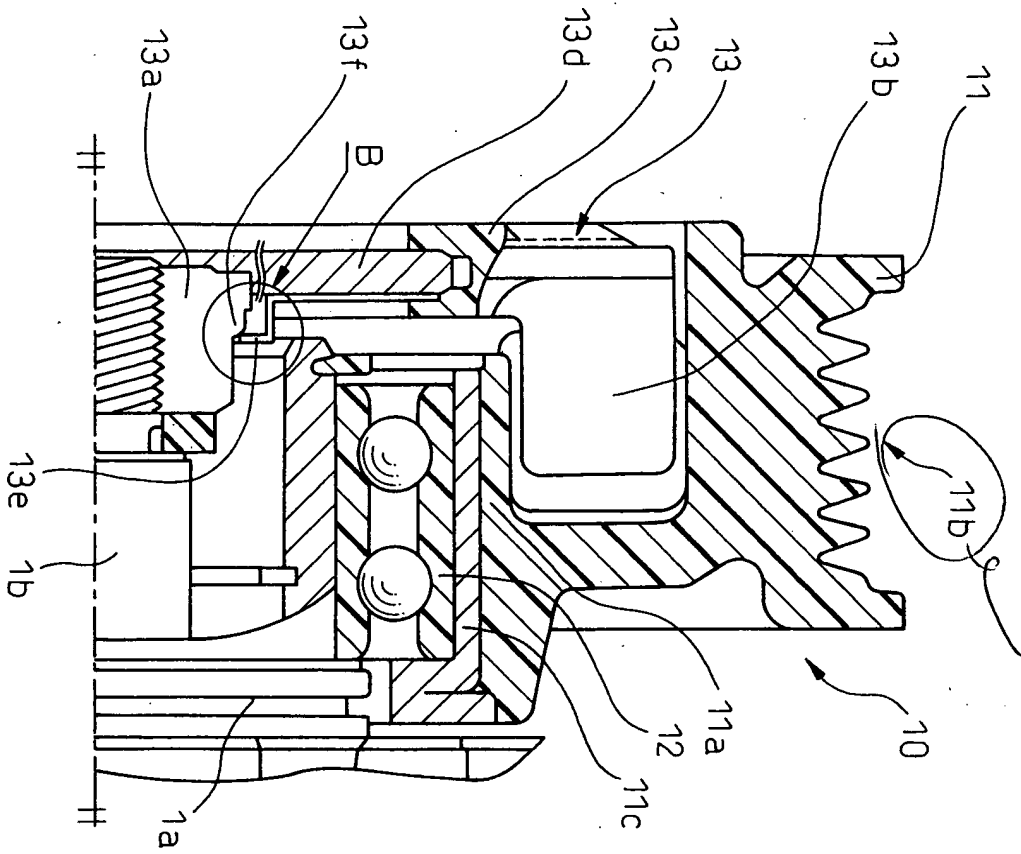
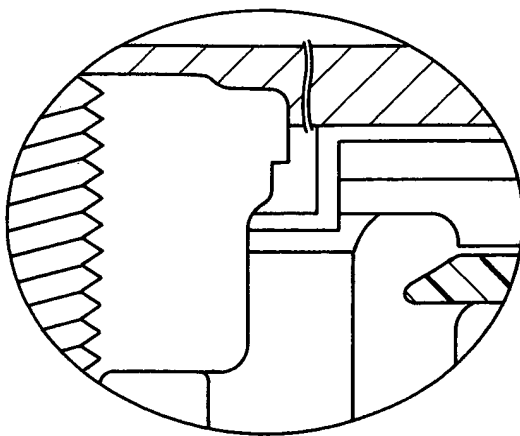


Fig. 7B



ENLARGED VIEW
OF REGION B